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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Letter dated 8 September 1997 from the Assistant Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and Head of Directorate-General for Palestinian Affairs addressed to the High Commissioner for Human Rights

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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AT GENEVA

The Permanent Mission of the League of Arab States to the United Nations Office at Geneva presents its compliments to the High Commissioner for Human Rights/Centre for Human Rights and has the honour to transmit herewith a note from M. Said Kamal, Assistant Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and Head of the Directorate-General for Palestinian Affairs, concerning the granting of licences by the Israeli Ministry of Health for the testing of dangerous pharmaceuticals on Palestinian and Arab detainees and prisoners.

The Permanent Mission requests the High Commissioner for Human Rights/Centre for Human Rights to investigate this matter and to submit this note to the Commission on Human Rights, at its next session, as an official document of the Commission.

The Permanent Mission of the League of Arab States to the United Nations Office takes this opportunity to convey to the High Commissioner for Human Rights/Centre for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 15 September 1997

8 September 1997

1. I wish to inform you that the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States has received a letter from the Ministry of Information of the Palestinian National Authority concerning the issue by the Israeli Ministry of Health of 1,000 licences to Israeli pharmaceutical companies to test dangerous pharmaceuticals on Palestinian and Arab detainees and prisoners in Israeli prisons. This information was revealed by a member of the Scientific Committee of the Israeli Knesset and confirmed by the head of the Pharmaceutical Department of the Israeli Ministry of Health before the members of the Israeli Kneeset during the same meeting. These licences, which will turn detainees and prisoners into guinea pigs, constitute a gross and unprecedented violation of their human dignity and pose a flagrant threat to their lives.

2. The measures taken by the Israeli occupation authorities blatantly violate the international conventions designed to safeguard the physical, psychological and mental health of the prisoners detained by the occupation forces and also flagrantly infringe the principles of international law, humanitarian values and human rights instruments.

3. In the light of the above, in fulfilment of your responsibilities as High Commissioner for Human Rights, we request you to make representations to the Israeli occupation authorities with a view to securing the immediate and total cessation of these experiments, which are incompatible with the most fundamental human rights, and to ensure that the Centre for Human Rights publishes a report on this matter.

(Signed) Said Kamal
Assistant Secretary-General of
the League of Arab States and
Head of the Directorate-General
for Palestinian Affairs